

## IN BRIEF

### Industry

- » Financial Services

### Challenges

- » Key financial application very slow
- » Data and server sprawl across the company
- » Need to improve DR capability
- » Required international bandwidth upgrades were too expensive

### Solution

- » Deployed Steelhead appliances in six offices around the world

### Benefits

- » Successfully centralized application servers from all overseas branch offices
- » Reduced time to open client-server application from 3 ½ minutes to “virtually instantaneous”
- » Avoided WAN bandwidth upgrade
- » Implementing new DR strategy using VMWare + Riverbed

**McLAGAN**  
PARTNERS



# McLagan Partners

## McLagan Partners Selects Riverbed® Steelhead® Appliances over Juniper for Global WAN Acceleration Project

McLagan partners is a financial services firm that focuses on providing compensation consulting for banks, brokerages and other financial firms around the world. They have offices in the United States, Europe and Asia. Headquartered in Stamford, CT, McLagan has branches in New York and Chicago, and in London, Tokyo and Hong Kong. They provide seamless and integrated global services with operations in all of these leading global financial locations. Their consultants share knowledge across borders and work in a seamless fashion with clients around the world. Regardless of location, each consultant at McLagan has access to the same proprietary data and adheres to the same operating principles and standards. Their projects can be focused on local, regional, or global markets.

### Challenge: Providing High Performance Around the World

In the summer of 2006, John Anderson, Vice President for McLagan Partners was facing a number of critical issues. At the top of the list was the unacceptably slow performance of a key internal application called Controls. Based on SQL, Controls is an in-house developed client server application.

**“Riverbed out-performed Juniper in every single test that we ran.”**

The application is used by every McLagan office for sales operations and for internal financial management. McLagan wanted to centralize their application servers from all branch offices because according to Anderson: “Having application servers at every branch was a nightmare when it came to aggregating information and reporting. We really wanted to have one central app server to run Controls, but the performance in our overseas offices would have been completely unacceptable.”

Using Controls over the WAN was quite a challenge: it took two and a half minutes for a user just to load the application, and then about one and a half minutes to download a file within the application. “After we deployed Steelhead appliances, the time dropped from almost four minutes down to just a few seconds! In fact, from our users’ point of view access was instantaneous.”

### Challenge: Pushing Content to Remote Branches – the 30 Day Queue

Another problem facing McLagan was pushing content out to their branches. On a daily basis McLagan needed to send large files to all their branches, but because of the latency and bandwidth issues facing them, the data push took far too long. In fact, before deploying their Steelhead appliances, they had a month-long queue of content that had not made it out to the branches. In only two days after the initial deployment, the queue had been eliminated, and now they can push content out to the branch in near real time. “The difference was amazing” said Anderson. “Not only was the queue eliminated, but we found that 90% of our WAN utilization was inter-office traffic; utilization on the WAN is now less than 30% - we have completely avoided the impending WAN upgrade we were planning.

**“After we deployed Steelhead appliances, the time dropped from almost four minutes down to just a few seconds!”**

**Challenge: A New DR Plan Using Riverbed and VMWare**

Pat Marafiotte CIO of McLagan Partners has asked Anderson to enhance the McLagan disaster recovery process. They are planning to move from an approach with local file servers in each branch, to a model based on using VMWare virtual machines. Riverbed will be essential in terms of moving virtual machines across the WAN to other McLagan offices which can be used as redundant sites. "We'll still back up local file servers to a secure off-site storage facility. But, if something happens to that server, the restore operation will be much faster using Riverbed. Before we would have had to retrieve the media from the off-site storage facility, now we'll just copy it across the WAN."

**The Evaluation and Selection Process – A No Brainer**

"We have purchased and implemented several networking products from Juniper which have worked very well for us. Therefore we were predisposed to deploy their WAN acceleration products too," said Anderson. "After implementing the Juniper devices we were impressed by the performance increase. When we first deployed Juniper appliances, the time to open the app

**"Everything was faster, even printing, after we deployed Riverbed."**

was cut in half and we were pretty happy at first. But, after comparing it to Riverbed, the difference was staggering."

"McLagan is owned by AON Corporation a leading provider of risk management services,

insurance and reinsurance brokerage, human capital and management consulting, and specialty insurance underwriting. Ash Patel, Global Chief Technology Officer at AON Consulting recommended we look at Riverbed. We got in touch with Riverbed and arranged for a try and buy. The boxes were simple to deploy and get running. In fact after the first box was deployed, I personally set up the other boxes," said Anderson.

"In addition to being easy to set up, we could keep the try and buy boxes," continued Anderson. "With Juniper's trial we would have had to decommission and return the test boxes, and then go through the whole thing all over again with the production units. Brian Malin and Andrew Yau are Network engineers who support the Riverbeds and feel the management of the Riverbeds is user friendly. Brian states "In everyday use this product is amazing, remote CIFS browsing is like being on a LAN. Very large files can quickly be copied across our WAN." The central management console also allows us to easily administer the Riverbed appliances.

**About Riverbed**

Riverbed Technology is the IT infrastructure performance company. The Riverbed family of wide area network (WAN) optimization solutions liberates businesses from common IT constraints by increasing application performance, enabling consolidation, and providing enterprise-wide network and application visibility – all while eliminating the need to increase bandwidth, storage or servers. Thousands of companies with distributed operations use Riverbed to make their IT infrastructure faster, less expensive and more responsive. Additional information about Riverbed (NASDAQ: RVBD) is available at [www.riverbed.com](http://www.riverbed.com)



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**SUMMARY**

**McLagan's deployment of Steelhead appliances from Riverbed has had a major impact on their operations:**

- » 100x improvement in response time for their MS-SQL based in-house financial applications which enabled a key server centralization project
- » Centralized their application servers from all branch offices
- » Dramatic reduction in WAN traffic – avoided a WAN upgrade